

For Little Women

POLLY ANN ELDREDGE.

Polly Ann Eldredge had \$100 in the savings bank. It was not money she had earned and saved herself, however. It represented many presents from her Uncle Amrah and Aunt Jo, on the birthdays and Christmas and Fourth of July that had come around in the twelve years of her life. They had always put money in the bank for her instead of buying a doll or a sled or books or toys for which she longed. She had had simple toys, of course, but nothing to compare with those she dreamed about. "Frugality" had always been Aunt Jo's favorite word. She had managed the household with that word, even to clothes; but she herself had always bought what she wanted. It was against this background that Polly had grown up, and she was now a young woman, ready to see the last of Aunt Jo's trunks.



POLLY AT THE SEASHORE.

depart. She had so many beautiful things that a small niece admired! And Polly longed for pretty things herself. What would straight hair and freckles matter if only she had pretty clothes to wear? thought Polly.

Then two days after Uncle Amrah and Aunt Jo had departed came a letter from a distant cousin who had a beautiful place on the seacoast, saying:

"We have never had a visit from little Polly. Please let her come to us for two months. We will take the best of care of her, and give her a very good time. She should bring all her pretty little frocks, as clothes so quickly here and we have many friends and a fine time. A friend, Mrs. Jamieson, is coming on your railroad and will stop off at Schuyler for her. Telegraph the answer."

"Oh, grandmother, grandmother!" cried Polly, wildly. "It's the very first invitation I have ever had—can't I, please—oh, can't I be managed somehow?"

Now grandmother, besides being devoted to Polly, remembered her own childhood and her own yearning for a good time. "You should go, in a minute, dearie," said grandmother, "if I had the money, but Uncle Amrah left me only a very little, not enough even to buy you a hat; for you see all our food is charged on Uncle Amrah's bill, so I did not need any. I hate to have you disappointed, Polly dear, but I do not see how it is possible. Grandmother's voice caught as if she felt as much like crying as Polly did.

"Couldn't we find Uncle Amrah if we telegraphed?" inquired Polly, anxiously. "I'm afraid not, dearie; they are traveling. And then, you know, Uncle Amrah thinks little girls are better at home. Polly knew quite well that Uncle Amrah did not believe in spending money upon his niece.

"If I only had that money that is coming in the legacy your Uncle Joshua left," continued grandmother, "you should go in a minute."

"Yes, dear, sweet, generous grandmother," cried Polly, "I would not take it when you have so little. Any way, there is enough for us here," said grandmother, "an old lady doesn't need much, you know."

Polly hugged her. Then a thought popped into her mind. "Why—can't I take my own money from the savings bank?" she cried, breathlessly.

"It would certainly be too bad," replied grandmother, "to disturb your little nest, but I tell you what we can do, dearie. We can take what is needed and when my legacy comes along you shall have enough of it to replace it."

"Hurrah! Hurrah!" cried Polly, boisterously, hugging grandmother. "But," she added in a minute, "I can't take your legacy, grandmother."

"It will not be very much," said grandmother. "I will take just so much of it as the amount I leave you in my will," she added.

"All right, then," cried Polly. "If you promise to do that I will accept it." "Agreed," said grandmother, heartily, and they sealed the compact with a kiss.

So Polly sent her first telegram, addressed to the cousins.

The telegraph operator smiled when Polly handed him her message. She had to limit

"It is ten words to save money. It said: 'Dear Cousin Pauline—I accept your beautiful invitation. Lovingly, POLLY.'"

Then money was drawn from the savings bank and Polly and her grandmother spent a delightful morning in planning how it should be spent to the best advantage—what necessary frocks must be bought and made at once; whether a beautiful, soft, wide, pink sash with fringed ends would be too much of an extravagance, and whether that big yellow straw hat with the pink roses in the milliner's window would be cheap enough to enable Polly to buy.

"We will go to Brighton this very afternoon," declared grandmother.

So as soon as the last dinner dish was dried and put away they started off. Just as they were about to leave the door a black-clad figure turned in at the gate.

"Oh, dear!" cried Polly, disappointedly. "It's Mrs. Meriwether. Can't you tell her we've gone?"

"Mrs. Meriwether has just lost her husband, dear," said grandmother, gently.

"I know," answered Polly, "but I hope she won't stay long this time."

The two ladies went into the parlor to talk, and Polly sat on the steps of the piazza. She heard the murmur of voices,

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"Oh, sure, but they'll not budge, I can't harness them, but mules."

A sudden thought came to the motorman; he told it to the conductor, who told it to the driver, and they all laughed.

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"A little more! A little more!" shouted the conductor. "There, there, now they're moving."

With a sudden twirl, the grays were brought into position, and the angry, wasp-like flicking of the whip, soon set them into a steady pace.

"All right!" called the driver. "Go ahead there!"

"That's one on me," said Ned to his companion, with an embarrassed smile, as they looked on, and let the triumphant cars clang by.

Dear old Auntie Mandy did our washing while we were down south recently, and she was such a happy, brave old soul that we worked very hard early and late; she must often have been weary, but nothing could depress her. In everything that occurred she saw only "good luck" for herself.

One day she brought home the washing in a high state of glee.

"Jes' think, Miss Andrew," she said, "I see your girl married! Isn't dat de best luck for poor, ole black woman like me?"

"I shall be very sorry to lose you, Mandy," said Mrs. Andrews, "but I'm glad if your life will be easier."

"Lose me?" gasped Mandy. "Lor! Miss Andrew, I can't afford to let you lose me! Jes' now, why, I see you done had! Dat's de honor ob marryin' in Br'er Jackson's family!"

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"To Mr. Bailey's funeral," the aunt replied.

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"If you had only asked sooner," said Aunt Mary, "I would have dressed you and taken you. Mr. Bailey was our principal citizen and he'd been dead for a long time. His memory honor. A way went to the carriage, but John and Billy stood and pondered. To miss the funeral of the principal citizen was out of the question; but they wanted to please Aunt Mary. There was no time to bathe, don best clothes and so forth, but they would honor the departed to the best of their ability. Imagine, then, Aunt Mary's surprise when she beheld her two well-meaning nephews walk into the village church and solemnly proceed up the center aisle, bare-footed, deplorably dirty, but with best hats on and rigid kid gloves!

There were two little boys who recently went to visit a country aunt. They were allowed to run about and get dreadfully dirty, and consequently were very happy. They adored their aunt and tried to please her, and they succeeded in rather an odd way upon one occasion, as you will see.

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A BLOCKADE.

"Let's don't!" said Ned to Fred. "All right, I'm with you," said Fred, and they rubbed noses as they sealed the compact. Then they drew their wagon straight across the car tracks and refused to move.

They were great big shaggy-footed iron grays, and the load they carried was too heavy, but they were tired, and the day was hot, and they didn't care for the new driver. Besides, the cars with their horrible clanging, were forever blocking their way, so now it was "tit for tat," no one could complain.

"Go on!" cried the driver, as they came to a halt.

"Don't listen," said Ned.

"Can we do it with these heavy traces?" suggested the more prudent Fred.

"If he does, stand right up on your hind legs; that's what I'm going to do."

"There's nothing like trying, at least we can give them some trouble, but don't start off if they whack you; that's just what they want, and they'll whack you again and again. My! I'd give my head to see the cars lined up behind us! My dear boy, if you weren't new to the trade you'd appreciate the fun. Now it's beginning, look sharp and stand ready!"

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WHAT IS THE TEXT?

I saw such a pretty sight from my window the other day, that in thinking of it afterward I decided it was the best sermon I had ever seen or heard—for this sermon was acted as well as spoken. I told the story afterward to some little folks and asked them to choose a text for it. When I have repeated the tale to you I will tell you the texts and you may decide which was the most fitting.

"A tired-looking woman came down the street bearing in her arms a restless, crying baby; behind her toddled a small boy, perhaps five years old. On his face was an expression of absolute content as he sucked and nibbled a stick of pink and white candy and he found life very, very sweet."

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AT THE FLAG STATION.

The Conleys lived so far out of town and used the trains so often that the little flag station at the foot of the hill was a necessity. Margaret was charmed when it was put up; she soon knew the various signals and the family grew to depend upon her, for the very faintest whistle could not escape her sharp ears; she seemed unconsciously to be always on the alert.

Margaret was a queer child, used from childhood to being a slave to the station. The child's heart stood still; in five minutes' time the express would come thundering by, and it never stopped at the flag station unless signaled. It would dash past into the train bearing their friends from town, and Margaret shut her eyes as the dreadful vision came before her, but she was quick to think. She raced with Daisy back to the flag station and snatched the signal, a bit of scarlet flag, from a nail on the wall. It was too late to warn the incoming train, which would not have time to back down to the switch and side-

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THE "HOOKING COUGH."

Written for The Star by Marietta M. Andrews.



It was one day beside the sea
Two little chaps made friends with me;
They had their shovels and their pails
And real boats with real sails;
They let me play with all their things,
I tied their chubby legs with strings,
They laughed at every word I said,
And gave me everything they had.

Shells, seaweeds, chocolate and toys—
I never saw two nicer boys!
We had a lovely time, we three,
For I liked them, and they liked me.
Then Frauline came and dragged me off,
She said they had the "hooking cough."
Something seems always bound to be
Wrong with the kids that's good to me!

FABLES OF TOYLAND.

A LITTLE TRAGEDY OF THE APPLE-BOUGH LANE.

In Apple-bough lane sunshine and shadow were mingled. When the warm radiance of noon hour bathed it the birds sang and the weeds rustled musically and the sky above went forever tumbling, as if a kindly tempest were at play among the cloud billows. At this hour squirrels played good naturedly by the hedge and went rollicking in wild blooms with which the lane was carpeted in summer. As the night came on, and when soft rain pattered among the dead leaves, Apple-bough lane was the most dismal place that you could imagine.

It was strange that no one had ever stumbled upon Jess and Miss Van Tinsel during those heavy summer afternoons; they lay side by side in the weeds, quite covered from view. They had been there so long.

Margaret cantered forward to meet it, but to her amazement it did not stop at the station. The child's heart stood still; in five minutes' time the express would come thundering by, and it